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Organization of the midterm comprehensive review of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life" 2005-2015

Note by the Secretary-General*

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/198, in which the Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its sixty-fourth session, a note on the organization of the midterm comprehensive review of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015. In that resolution, the Assembly also recalled its resolution 55/196, by which it proclaimed 2003 the International Year of Freshwater, and its resolution 58/217, by which it proclaimed 2005-2015 the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", to commence on 22 March 2005. In the latter resolution, the Assembly stated the goals of the Decade, and called upon the relevant United Nations bodies, the specialized agencies, regional commissions and other organizations of the United Nations system to deliver a coordinated response, utilizing existing resources and voluntary funds to make 2005-2015 a decade of action. The present note outlines the activities that have been prepared for the midterm review of the decade and provides recommendations to Member States on the way forward.

* The present note was prepared by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with UN-Water, the inter-agency mechanism designated by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, through its High-level Committee on Programmes, as the coordinating mechanism in the United Nations system for follow-up action in the area of water resources and sanitation.

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I. Introduction

1. Recognizing that progress needed to be accelerated towards the internationally agreed development goals related to water and sanitation, the General Assembly, in its resolution 58/217, designated 2005-2015 as the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", to commence on 22 March 2005, and also recalled its resolution 55/196, in which it declared 2003 the International Year of Freshwater.

2. In this regard, by its resolution 59/228, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its sixtieth session, a report on the activities that he and relevant organizations of the United Nations system planned for the Decade. The report was submitted (A/60/158) to the Assembly, but was not discussed.

3. By its resolution 58/217, the General Assembly decided that the goals of the Decade should be achieving a greater focus on the implementation of water-related programmes and projects, while striving to ensure the participation and involvement of women in water-related development efforts and the furtherance of cooperation at all levels in order to help to achieve the internationally agreed water-related goals.

4. The General Assembly also called upon the relevant United Nations bodies, the specialized agencies, the regional commissions and other organizations of the United Nations system to deliver a coordinated response, utilizing existing resources and voluntary funds to make 2005-2015 truly a decade of action.

5. In its resolution 64/198, the General Assembly welcomed the activities related to the implementation of the first half of the Decade undertaken by Member States, the Secretariat and the organizations of the United Nations system, inter alia, through inter-agency work, as well as contributions from major groups, and emphasized the importance of further country-level implementation of the Decade.

6. In the same resolution, the General Assembly encouraged Member States, the Secretariat, organizations of the United Nations system, through their coordination mechanism, and major groups to continue their efforts to achieve the internationally agreed water-related goals contained in Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

7. The Millennium Declaration committed Governments around the world to a clear agenda for combating poverty, hunger, illiteracy, disease, discrimination against women and environmental degradation. In the area of water resources, Heads of State and Government pledged in 2000 to reduce by half the proportion of people who are unable to reach, or to afford, safe drinking water by 2015 and to stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources.

8. Additional goals adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development are aimed at developing integrated water resource management and water efficiency plans by 2005 and at halving the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation by 2015.

9. The primary goal of the "Water for Life" Decade is to promote efforts to fulfil international commitments made on water and water-related issues by 2015, to be in point of fact a decade of action. This represents the second international decade on

water-related issues organized by the United Nations, succeeding the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, 1981-1990.

10. UN-Water, the United Nations system-wide mechanism for achieving coherence and coordination in the water-related activities of the relevant agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, was established by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination through its High-level Committee on Programmes in 2004.

11. During the first half of the Decade, each country has adopted its own approach to organizing activities in line with national development plans and policies and with regional and global agreements. For example, in the case of African countries, national water initiatives in the first half of the Decade have been guided by the African Ministerial Council on Water, which receives guidance from the African Union. At its request, the Council receives technical support and advice from the regional arm of UN-Water in Africa.

12. The present note, in support of the midterm comprehensive review of the Decade, provides information on the activities of the first half of the Decade and provides particulars available at the midpoint of the Decade on some of the international, regional and national activities that are being planned for the second half.

II. Background

13. Public awareness of the importance of the use and management of freshwater resources for achieving sustainable development increased dramatically in recent years as a result of a number of ongoing international and national initiatives and activities that led up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. Water and sanitation issues were high on the agenda at the meeting in Johannesburg. The International Year of Freshwater, 2003, was well timed to follow up on recommendations for action on water and sanitation made at the Millennium Summit and the Johannesburg Summit.

14. During the "Water for Life" Decade, special emphasis is being placed on ensuring the participation and involvement of women in water-related development efforts, as called for by the General Assembly in resolution 64/198. The challenge of the Decade is to focus attention on action-oriented activities and policies that ensure the long-term sustainable management of water resources, in terms of both quantity and quality, and include measures to improve sanitation. Achieving the goals of the "Water for Life" Decade will require sustained commitment, cooperation and investment on the part of all stakeholders during the second half of the Decade from 2010 to 2015 and beyond.

III. Intergovernmental processes at the midpoint of the International Decade "Water for Life"

15. In its resolution 58/217, the General Assembly decided that the goals of the Decade should support the achievement of internationally agreed water-related goals contained in Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan

of Implementation, and, as appropriate, those identified by the Commission on Sustainable Development.

16. At the eleventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in 2003, the special themes selected for the first implementation cycle following the World Summit on Sustainable Development were water resources, sanitation and human settlements. The twelfth session, in 2004, provided an exhaustive review of the current state of implementation of policies and practices to meet the internationally agreed goals in water and sanitation.

17. At its thirteenth session, in 2005, the Commission on Sustainable Development explored policy options for furthering implementation on the issues of water and sanitation, as well as on human settlements. The final decision of the Commission, contained in its resolution 13/1, provided a framework within which Governments and the organizations of the United Nations system, working in partnership with major groups and other stakeholders, could take action in the areas of water and sanitation. Options were presented on access to basic water services; integrated water resources management; access to basic sanitation; sanitation and hygiene education; and wastewater collection, treatment and reuse.

18. Resolution 13/1 also provided a range of measures and approaches to address water, sanitation and human settlements in an integrated manner, taking into account economic, social and environmental aspects, related sectoral policies and cross-cutting issues as identified at the eleventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. A user-friendly matrix was developed in this process to highlight policy options, possible actions and case studies (see http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd13/matrix.pdf). Both the resolution and the matrix were used as guidelines for action during the first half of the "Water for Life" Decade.

19. At its sixteenth and seventeenth sessions, the Commission on Sustainable Development reviewed water as a cross-cutting issue with reference to the themes of the Commission for those sessions, namely drought, desertification, land, agriculture and Africa.

20. In 2010, as part of the midterm comprehensive review process of the Decade, as called for by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/198, the President of the General Assembly has taken the initiative to hold a high-level interactive dialogue on 22 March 2010, World Water Day. The dialogue is expected to begin with a plenary session with opening statements and a video-link to the World Water Day celebrations in Nairobi.

21. The plenary will be followed by three successive panel discussions on the themes: water and the internationally agreed development goals; water: climate change and disasters; and water and peace and security. The outcome will be a non-negotiated summary by the President of the General Assembly.

22. As welcomed by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/198, in June 2010 the Government of Tajikistan will host a high-level international conference in Dushanbe for a midterm review of the "Water for Life" Decade.

23. The conference, to which the Government of Tajikistan is inviting Heads of State and Government, is expected to open with a plenary session with formal statements, to be followed by six successive interactive round-table discussions on

six themes: water and the internationally agreed development goals; water and the gender-related development goals; water and climate change; water and disasters; transboundary water cooperation; and capacity-building for integrated water resources management. The proposed three-day format is expected to allow for deeper discussions and a greater consideration of diverse regional and subregional challenges under each of the three themes.

24. On each theme, depending on the number of participants at the conference, several round tables will be held, with differing regional compositions to allow for a diversity of perspectives and views.

25. The Government of Tajikistan has formally requested Member States, entities of the United Nations system and the United Nations coordination mechanism, UN-Water, to provide technical cooperation and financial assistance in the organization of the conference.

26. In February 2010, at the twelfth meeting of the senior programme managers in Hamilton, Canada, UN-Water decided, for reasons of coherence and complementarity, and in the spirit of "Delivering as One", as called for by the Secretary-General, to channel all technical assistance from its members and programmes for the conference through the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Tajikistan.

27. Through the Resident Coordinator, UN-Water has created an ad hoc open-ended working group to mobilize and coordinate the technical cooperation efforts of the members and partners of UN-Water for the conference. The working group will be supported through the two UN-Water offices located in Zaragoza, Spain, and Bonn, Germany. UN-Water will also help publicize the conference and its outcome, particularly through its communications activities.

28. The Government of Tajikistan has announced that it will present the outcome of the high-level international conference in Dushanbe to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session.

IV. Programmes and activities of the United Nations system

A. UN-Water[1]

29. During the first half of the "Water for Life" Decade, 2005-2009, UN-Water was the central coordinator for the activities of the organizations of the United Nations system. The UN-Water terms of reference and modalities of work cover the elements of a detailed inter-agency plan for addressing water and sanitation issues, and also include mechanisms for interacting with stakeholders that are not members of the United Nations system. The chairmanship of UN-Water, which rotates among

[1] The work of UN-Water encompasses all aspects of freshwater, including surface and groundwater resources and the interface between freshwater and seawater. It includes freshwater resources, in terms of both quality and quantity, their development, assessment, management, monitoring and use (including, for example, domestic uses, agriculture and ecosystem requirements). The scope of work also includes sanitation, including both access to and use of sanitation by populations and the interactions between sanitation and freshwater. It further includes water-related disasters, emergencies and other extreme events and their impact on human security.

its members, is currently held by the United Nations University, while the Department of Economic and Social Affairs acts as the secretariat. Information on UN-Water can be found at http://www.unwater.org.

30. UN-Water has defined a number of thematic initiatives for its work over the Decade, which include: coping with water scarcity and pollution; sanitation, safe drinking water and health; gender mainstreaming in water and sanitation; integrated water resources management; transboundary water issues; and disaster risk reduction. Africa was selected as a geographical focus owing to its exceptional needs in water and sanitation. A series of policy briefs have been released by UN-Water during the Decade in order to reflect its thematic initiatives.

31. One of the four programmes of UN-Water is the World Water Assessment Programme, hosted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which provides the background assessment for and produces the *World Water Development Report*. The first edition of the report, *Water for People, Water for Life*, was launched at the Third World Water Forum, in Kyoto, Japan, in March 2003 (see www.world.water-forum3.com/), the second edition was launched at the Fourth World Water Forum, in Mexico City, in March 2006, and the third edition, *Water in a Changing World*, was launched at the Fifth World Water Forum, in Istanbul, on 22 March 2009. The fourth edition, *Managing Water under Conditions of Uncertainty and Risk*, will be launched in 2012.

32. UN-Water's World Water Assessment Programme provides comprehensive information and analysis on the current state of the world's water resources and potential policy solutions, bringing together relevant inputs from Governments, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and the private sector. Information on participation in the programme is available at http://www.unesco.org/water/wwap/index.shtml.

33. Two other UN-Water programmes were launched in the first half of the Decade: the Programme on Capacity Development, located in Bonn and hosted by the United Nations University, and the Programme on Advocacy and Communication, located in Zaragoza and hosted by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

34. The UNICEF/World Health Organization (WHO) Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation operates under the umbrella of UN-Water and reports on a regular basis since 1991 on the status of water supply and sanitation (see sect. IV.D below).

35. A number of activities coordinated under UN-Water have cross-linkages with UN-Oceans, another water-oriented coordinating mechanism, which was also set up under the Chief Executives Board for Coordination to strengthen the coordination and cooperation of United Nations activities related to oceans and coastal areas. The cross-linkages between UN-Water and UN-Oceans include the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities and activities for the benefit of small island developing States (see http://www.un-oceans.org). Linkages between UN-Water and UN-Energy are also developing, particularly on the emerging challenges in the water-energy nexus.

B. Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation

36. The Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation was established by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in order to give advice, galvanize global action and raise awareness on water and sanitation issues, to help mobilize funds for water and sanitation projects and to encourage new partnerships as part of international efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve the agreed development goals in water and sanitation.

37. The Advisory Board, chaired by Prince Willem-Alexander of Orange, includes a wide range of eminent persons, technical experts, stakeholders from civil society and other knowledgeable individuals with experience in inspiring people, moving the machinery of government and working with the media, the private sector and civil society.

38. UN-Water and the Advisory Board work closely in providing a coordinated response from the United Nations system, involving Member States and civil society. In 2010, the Board released the second version of its Hashimoto action plan, in which it proposes policies, strategies and actions in five areas: financing; sanitation; monitoring and reporting; integrated water resources management; and water and disaster.

C. United Nations Inter-agency Task Force on Gender and Water

39. In 2003, the Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality established the Inter-agency Task Force on Gender and Water, with the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs as task manager. UN-Water also supported the creation of the Task Force, thus linking gender focal points and water focal points in each agency. Currently the Task Force, which comprises 18 United Nations programmes and agencies, 5 non-United Nations entities and 2 observers, reports annually to the Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and semi-annually to UN-Water, which, at its twelfth meeting of senior programme managers, reaffirmed gender and water as a cross-cutting strategic thematic focus area, which status it will maintain in UN-Water into the second half of the Decade.

40. The Task Force submitted a paper, entitled "A gender perspective on water and sanitation" (see http://www.un.water.org/downloads/bground_2.pdf), to the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in April 2005. The paper provided content for much of the discussion on the cross-cutting issue of gender in water and sanitation. In 2008, in coordination with the UN-Water Programme on Capacity-Building, the Task Force held an expert workshop on gender and water statistics, which produced several technical recommendations that were fed back into the United Nations statistical community.

D. Joint monitoring programme for water supply and sanitation

41. WHO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) actively contribute to global water supply and sanitation monitoring and information dissemination through their joint monitoring programme under the umbrella of UN-Water. Coverage figures produced by the programme are the official reference data for the

United Nations system, including with regard to the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

42. In the 2008 report, "Progress in Drinking-water and Sanitation", the joint monitoring programme presented coverage data for most countries of the world as of 2006 (see www.wssinfo.org). The figures revealed the glaring contrasts between rich and poor nations and between rural and urban populations in the poorest countries. Its latest report is scheduled to be released in March 2010.

43. For its coverage estimates, the joint monitoring programme uses nationally representative household surveys such as the demographic and health survey, the UNICEF multiple indicator cluster surveys and the WHO global health survey, as well as other reliable country surveys and national censuses that allow for the comparison of data. The initial database provided country, global and regional coverage estimates, disaggregated by service type and by urban and rural areas, for 1990 and 2002. The 2006 report updated coverage estimates to 2004 as a baseline for the "Water for Life" Decade.

E. Global Annual Assessment on Sanitation and Drinking-Water

44. The UN-Water Global Annual Assessment on Sanitation and Drinking-Water reports on the capacity of countries to make progress towards the Millennium Development Goal on water and sanitation and on the effectiveness of external support agencies to facilitate this process. The assessment has been designed in response to the need to reduce the reporting burden and harmonize different reporting mechanisms of the Member States of the Organization. The assessment also increases the comprehensiveness and accountability of information on the drinking-water and sanitation sectors. The initiative is technically coordinated by WHO.

F. United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

45. The aim of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction is to mobilize Governments, United Nations agencies, regional bodies, the private sector and civil society to unite efforts in building resilient societies by developing a culture of prevention and preparedness. The "Water for Life" Decade has the same time frame as the Hyogo Framework for Action: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Japan, in 2005. This synergy provides a unique opportunity to strengthen understanding of how the management of risk related to disasters should be linked to water resources management.

V. Regional initiatives

46. UN-Water, which includes the secretariats of all five United Nations regional commissions as members, encourages regional inter-agency networking arrangements between the regional commissions and regional offices of the various United Nations agencies. The first regional UN-Water initiative was established by the Economic Commission for Africa, which has been developing a workplan of

activities for UN-Water/Africa. The workplan provides a good model for the work of UN-Water in other regions.

A. Economic Commission for Africa

47. Africa's share of global freshwater resources, 10 per cent, closely matches its share of world population, 12 per cent, but the distribution of this resource is uneven, including areas of severe aridity, such as the Sahara and Sahel in the north and the Kalahari in the south, to areas of abundant water resources, such as the Congo basin, which is estimated to have 50 per cent of Africa's freshwater. The continent suffers from one of the most unstable rainfall regimes in the world. The extremes of shortage and excess of water result in different forms of socio-economic insecurity.

48. In the field of water policy, strategy and institutional arrangements, a number of advances have been made in African countries. There is an increasing commitment to water policy reform and a strong trend towards decentralization of water institutions. The main goal of UN-Water in Africa is to ensure coherence and foster joint action by all United Nations agencies active in the water sector in Africa, particularly during the "Water for Life" Decade. The main activities on the UN-Water work programme in Africa are:

(a) Advocacy for raising the profile of water issues targeted towards policymakers: UN-Water organized the Pan African Implementation and Partnership Conference on Water under the auspices of the African Ministerial Council on Water in Addis Ababa in December 2003, at which Africa's priority implementation needs and required actions were defined. The major outcomes formed the basis of the work programme of many African countries in water and sanitation. Based on an action plan developed and approved by the Executive Committee of the African Ministerial Council on Water in June 2005, policy priority has been given to the role of gender in water resources management in Africa. Detailed information is available at www.uneca.org/awich;

(b) Monitoring of progress in implementing regional and global programmes: UN-Water initiated a biannual *African Water Development Report*, based on reports at the basin and the national and subregional levels. A final version of the report, covering 30 countries, was released in September 2005;

(c) Improving access to information on African water resources: UN-Water has set up the African Water Information Clearing House, a continent-wide information system backed up by subregional networks of water and geo-information specialists and institutions.

49. With Africa designated as the geographic focus of UN-Water, the activities described above are expected to make a significant contribution to improving the development and utilization of Africa's water resources for socio-economic development, and thus to progress in reaching the goals of the "Water for Life" Decade.

B. Economic Commission for Europe

50. Integrated water resources management in the Economic Commission for Europe region, with more than 150 major transboundary rivers, over 100 transboundary groundwater aquifers and about 30 international lakes, requires joint action among the countries that share basins, including the establishment of joint bodies such as river commissions. In February 2005, at the sixtieth annual session of the Economic Commission for Europe, a framework for policies, strategies and action on water and sanitation covering the period until 2015 was agreed upon. The policies and actions that form the response of the Commission to the challenges of the Decade are based on its 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and its two Protocols, on water and health and on civil liability for damage caused by industrial accidents. These regional legal instruments set goals and tasks for countries and institutions that are responsible for integrated water resources management in a transboundary context. The provisions of the European Union water framework directive and some 150 bilateral and multilateral agreements supplement these instruments.

51. The contributions of the Economic Commission for Europe to the Decade include research and capacity-building support in such technical areas as flood management, protection of water-related ecosystems, groundwater management and monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters. Activities in these areas were carried out in cooperation with UNESCO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), WHO, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and others.

C. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

52. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean conducts research and disseminates information on the economic and institutional aspects of water resources management in the countries of that region. It also provides advice on water legislation and regulation of water utilities and cooperates with a number of global and regional projects, such as the Global Water Partnership and Visión Andina, assessing the impact of trade and investment agreements on water and water utilities.

53. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean publishes the newsletter of the Network for Cooperation in Integrated Water Resource Management for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean twice a year, in English and Spanish. Organizations involved in the technical network include private and public water resources management institutions. The Network's goal is to improve the capacity for multiple-use management of water resources in diverse dimensions (institutional, administrative, economic-financial, legal and technical), through exchange of information and direct cooperation between its members (more information on the Network and the Commission's work programme and publications on water resources can be found at http://www.eclac.cl/drni/).

D. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

54. The Asia and the Pacific region is home to more than two thirds of the world's population and, on average, over 80 per cent of deaths caused by natural disasters annually takes place in the region. As part of its activities related to the "Water for Life" Decade, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific initiated two major programmes in 2004 and 2005: (a) the application of strategic planning and management to assist developing countries in the preparation of integrated water resources management plans, with emphasis on eradicating poverty and meeting the goals of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and (b) integrating disaster risk management into water resources management.

55. The programme on integrated water resources management builds on the results of case studies in 17 developing countries that applied the guidelines on strategic planning and management of water resources developed earlier by the Commission. The case studies were carried out in 2003 and 2004 as part of a regional project funded through the Development Account. This programme supports the implementation of the integrated water resources management component of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation within the framework of the "Water for Life" Decade.

56. The programme on water-related disaster risk management links the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, to the "Water for Life" Decade. The programme builds on the Commission's existing subregional networks on hydrology, meteorology and disaster risk management, especially the Typhoon Committee and the Panel on Tropical Cyclones. The integration of disaster risk management into the management of water resources includes improvements in multi-hazard mapping and warning systems and the enhancement of disaster preparedness at the local, national and regional levels, as well as the promotion of community-based disaster risk management practices. The region's developed and developing countries are learning from one another's experience, for example, through the annual hydrological workshops of the Typhoon Committee.

E. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

57. The Western Asia region has always experienced a low level of natural water availability, especially in arid or extremely arid climatic zones. Rapid population growth, unsustainable water use and increasing pollution levels further contribute to water scarcity problems in the region. Moreover, most water resources used in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia region, both surface water and groundwater, are shared by several riparian countries.

58. To address these challenges, the Committee initiated several activities in 2004 and 2005 as part of preparations for the "Water for Life" Decade, mainly in building capacity for shared water resources management and integrated water resources management. A training manual for the region was prepared, addressing the integration of water policies, institutional and legislative tools and the administrative methods required for integrated water resources management.

59. On the issue of shared water resources, several pilot areas (relating to surface water and groundwater resources) were studied to serve as models for reaching agreements on sharing resources and promoting joint technical and managerial

cooperation among the riparian countries. A series of workshops was held to assist Member States in enhancing their negotiation capacity and skills and promoting conflict resolution in the region. The Commission also focused on the sustainable management of shared groundwater resources, especially in the many countries where groundwater is the main source of water. Emphasis has been placed on integrating specific policies for groundwater management into policies at the basin level.

VI. Assistance to country programmes

60. The coherence of the actions of the United Nations system at the country level is crucial to achieving the overall objectives of the "Water for Life" Decade. UN-Water is encouraging exchanges of information and dialogue on policymaking on water and sanitation issues within the United Nations system and with external partners and stakeholders. Such cooperation is essential in efforts to incorporate the water agenda in country-level exercises and processes such as the common country assessment, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and poverty reduction strategy papers.

61. As part of the actions taken for the "Water for Life" Decade, UNDP and the World Bank have undertaken a joint initiative to identify a few key areas in the water and sanitation sector in areas where the two organizations would benefit from closer collaboration. The focus of the work is on the need to support countries in scaling up their efforts to reach the water and sanitation targets.

62. The UNDP Water Governance Programme and the World Bank's Water and Sanitation Programme are working together to develop rural and urban initiatives in water supply and sanitation. Both programmes can influence large-scale investments to focus more on poverty-reduction targets and encourage the participation of local-level stakeholders in decision-making processes to ensure more equitable distribution of investment benefits. Both programmes promote governance (policy, legal, regulatory and institutional reform) and build capacities at the national and local levels, and both provide similar structures for service delivery, including regional and country offices.

63. UNDP places poverty eradication at the centre of its work on water supply, sanitation and human settlements, with an overall investment of over $400 million in grants. Through this work, UNDP, with a variety of partners, has produced replicable results in providing access to affordable drinking water and sanitation to the poor in peri-urban and rural areas. The Water Governance Programme focuses on addressing local capacity constraints in order to improve access to water and sanitation and operates at the local and national levels.

64. At the national level, UNDP facilitates communication and coordination among the multiple actors dealing with water resources. UNDP and its partners have been facilitating country-level action for the preparation of plans for integrated water resources management and for promoting the participation of multiple stakeholders in the implementation of water resources management practices.

65. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs provides policy advice at the national level, particularly through its technical advisory services, to developing countries, in particular least developed countries and small island developing States,

for strengthening institutional capacity to develop integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans, encouraging the participation of all stakeholders.

66. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has developed training materials for users at all levels to promote better use of water in agriculture as part of its activities for the "Water for Life" Decade. Areas covered include educational approaches aimed at farmers and farm communities; technical materials for irrigation professionals; irrigation scheme management training courses; and policy advice in agricultural water management. In addition, FAO is promoting more sustainable agricultural practices, with a view to reducing negative environmental impacts and water pollution, through its integrated plant-nutrient and pest-management programmes. These practices are applied in member countries through technical assistance and South-South cooperation programmes and projects.

67. UNICEF continues to expand its water, sanitation and hygiene programmes, supporting activities in some 93 countries, ranging from national policy development to direct support for improved service delivery in focus areas. UNICEF interventions focus on expanding programmes that promote improved hygiene and sanitation, while maintaining support for improved water-supply services.

68. UNICEF supported water, sanitation and hygiene education programmes for schools in some 76 countries in the first half of the Decade and plans to expand the programme during the second half of the Decade. Components include hygiene education and teacher education in hygiene in primary schools; construction of new water and sanitation facilities in schools; developing and promoting child- and girl-friendly facility designs; and promoting hygienic behaviour change in communities.

69. WHO, working with its partners, is developing a suite of tools to assist countries in assessing the health impacts of water and sanitation and to assess the costs and impacts (both health and non-health) of policy and technical alternatives to support and inform intersectoral policy dialogue. The tools were launched during the first year of the Decade and are being progressively updated and expanded as the Decade progresses.

VII. Communications strategy

70. The "Water for Life" Decade draws on much of the work initiated during the International Year of Freshwater, 2003, and provides an opportunity to maintain momentum on freshwater issues. In this regard, strategic communications and coordination are crucial for the coherence and success of such efforts.

71. To support the launch of the Decade in March 2005, key messages, drafted by UN-Water in conjunction with the Department of Public Information, were circulated for discussion at a meeting of the United Nations Communications Group, which is composed of communications focal points within all United Nations agencies. Materials that were developed to support the initial launch of the Decade include a logo, a website and educational and audio-visual materials. In the second half of the Decade, responsibility for supporting communication and outreach activities of UN-Water and its members will fall increasingly to the UN-Water Decade Programme on Communication and Advocacy in Zaragoza.

72. The Programme on Communication and Advocacy has organized a series of catalytic communications initiatives, including: the UN-Water pavilion at the Zaragoza Expo 2008; support to the UN-Water exhibition area at the World Water Forum in Istanbul in 2009, which was coordinated by the UN-Water secretariat and FAO; the annual Stockholm Water Week; a journalists workshop on water and a workshop for water operators in Zaragoza; a joint event for African water officials with the Spanish fund Casa Africa in Gran Canary Island; and a series of lectures in 2010 on water quality around the world under an agreement with the Cervantes Cultural Institute.

73. The Programme has also mapped out water landmark events over the next 30 months leading up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012.

A. Logo

74. The logo for the International "Water for Life" Decade, 2005-2015, was chosen by UN-Water from several designs submitted by the Department of Public Information and an independent designer working on a pro bono basis. The logo chosen, submitted by the independent designer, is shown below.

75. The design was submitted by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to the Publications Board of the Department of Public Information in January 2005. The decision on the logo was approved by consensus through e-mail correspondence among the members of the Logo Approval Committee. The logo is intended to be used by UN-Water members, programmes and other United Nations entities on all United Nations publications and promotional materials pertaining to the Decade and can also be used by outside parties who seek permission through the online interactive form.

B. Website

76. The official website for the "Water for Life" Decade was launched on 22 March 2005 (www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/). Work is currently under way to increase content in all official United Nations languages. The website, managed by the UN-Water Programme on Advocacy and Communication, is housed and maintained at United Nations Headquarters by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in consultation with the Department of Public Information. Links to all the other member organizations of UN-Water are included. The website will be used as an awareness-raising tool and a clearing house to present activities taking

place at the international, regional and national levels with the support of members and partners of UN-Water. The website www.unwater.org provides additional information on activities of members and partners related to the Decade.

C. Promotional and educational materials and publications

77. The Department of Public Information and UN-Water produced a promotional booklet for the Decade which includes images, facts, figures and recommendations for action on a number of water-related themes. The booklet is available in English and French.

78. WHO, on behalf of UN-Water, prepared an advocacy sourcebook for the "Water for Life" Decade, to be used as a guide for local groups on how to raise awareness on water issues. It will be progressively updated in cooperation with other members and partners of UN-Water throughout the Decade to provide advocacy support on diverse themes.

79. A DVD was produced by the Department of Public Information and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs containing: the message of the Secretary-General for the Decade; an eight-minute video, *Water: the Drop of Life*; a children's video, *Splish and Splash*; and the promotional booklet for the Decade.

80. Occurring almost simultaneously with the "Water for Life" Decade is the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 2005-2014. The synergy of these two initiatives provides a useful framework for strengthening and promoting education programmes and training projects to increase awareness and preparedness within schools, families and communities on water- and sanitation-related issues.

81. UNICEF has developed interactive learning resources for young people on water, environment and sanitation. These include a computer game of strategy and survival, entitled "Water Alert!", which includes a facilitator's guide and instructions for use in developing countries, and a user-friendly text module with an online discussion board. These resources, in English, French and Spanish, are available online and on CD at UNICEF Voices of Youth (www.unicef.org/voy).

82. The second edition of the *World Water Development Report*, prepared by the UN-Water World Water Assessment Programme, was issued in March 2006 as a major focus of the Decade's public information activities, and will be issued every three years throughout the Decade. *The African Water Development Report* is a regional report similar to the *World Water Development Report*. Subsidiary reports at the subregional and national levels have also been developed as stand-alone products for providing up-to-date information and monitoring tools.

83. In 2006, the UNICEF-WHO joint monitoring programme, operating under the umbrella of UN-Water, issued a report providing 2004 coverage on access to drinking water supply and sanitation estimates as a baseline for the Decade. The programme issued another report in 2008, and further reports to assess progress throughout the Decade in 2010. Additional reports are planned for release in 2012, 2014 and 2015.

84. The proceedings and framework for action resulting from a round table on water, sanitation and hygiene education for schools, held in Oxford, in January

2005, set out actions that must be taken to ensure that by 2015, the end of the "Water for Life" Decade, all schools receive a basic quality package of water, sanitation and hygiene education. The programme was sponsored by UNICEF and the International Water and Sanitation Centre, with the support of Oxfam Great Britain and the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council.

85. UNEP has a wide range of information products that are relevant to the observance of the "Water for Life" Decade, including the *Atlas of International Freshwater Agreements*, *Vital Water Graphics* and a diverse portfolio on coral reefs (relevant websites include www.unep.org, www.gpa.unep.org, www.unep.org/dewa/water and www.unep.org/regionalseas.

VIII. Partnership initiatives

A. Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council

86. The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, a multi-stakeholder organization dedicated to enhancing collaboration in the water-supply and sanitation sector, works in close cooperation with the United Nations system, including WHO, UNICEF, UN-Habitat, UNEP and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (see www.wsscc.org). The Council's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All programme was recognized by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its thirteenth session as an existing initiative that should be supported for countries in their pursuit of the international development goals on water and sanitation. The partnership, which involves national and regional activities in over 35 developing countries, aims to establish national coalitions and mobilize political support and action around the world on the importance of sanitation, hygiene and water in achieving these goals and in reducing poverty during the "Water for Life" Decade.

B. Global Water Partnership

87. The Global Water Partnership is a working partnership among all those involved in water management: government agencies, private companies, professional organizations, multilateral development agencies and others committed to meeting international goals related to water and sanitation. This network supports the idea that the goals of the "Water for Life" Decade can be reached only if there is collective awareness-raising on the key role of water in achieving sustainable development. The particular contribution that the Partnership makes to the Decade is to work within countries, and with the community of international organizations, to assist countries in developing integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans by 2005, as set out in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

88. To assist in this effort, the Partnership, together with the Netherlands Water Partnership, has developed the "Toolbox on integrated water resources management" to provide water-management professionals clear examples of good and bad practices and lessons learned from real-life implementation experiences. The toolbox offers a compendium of over 50 policies and actions, or tools, for putting integrated water resources management into practice, and each tool is illustrated by real cases, giving examples of how a tool has worked in a given

combination and context. The toolbox provides a range of tools which users can select or modify according to their needs and local circumstances.

C. Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

89. The Ramsar Convention has been highly supportive of the "Water for Life" Decade. On the occasion of World Wetlands Day (2 February 2005), the Ramsar secretariat invited representatives of the main environmental and aid agencies in Geneva to a debate on the theme "Natural mitigation of natural disasters". The main focus of the event was the Indian Ocean tsunami, but the debate also covered broader issues, including many related to the "Water for Life" Decade.

90. The ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention was held in November 2005 in Kampala. The theme for 2005 was "Wetlands and water, supporting life, sustaining livelihoods". The issue of poverty alleviation was also the theme of World Wetlands Day 2006, on which occasion the messages of the Decade were further promoted.

D. Gender and Water Alliance

91. The Gender and Water Alliance, a network of over 300 organizations and individuals around the world, offers a mix of information- and knowledge-sharing initiatives, such as electronic conferencing, a website, advocacy leaflets and videos, and capacity-building and pilot programmes (see www.genderandwater.org). For the "Water for Life" Decade, the Alliance is working with partners such as UNDP, UN-Habitat and Cap-Net to develop gender strategies in the water sector and to provide training and materials to water managers on the importance of involving both women and men in the sustainable management of water and sanitation. The Alliance showcased these materials at the Fourth World Water Forum in Mexico in March 2006, and at other events. In addition, the Alliance cooperated with UN-Water in Africa in organizing a seminar on gender and water resources management in Pretoria in March 2005, where an action plan on gender and water resources management in Africa was drawn up. The plan was endorsed by the African Ministerial Council on Water and will be implemented with all major stakeholders, including the African Water Facility hosted by the African Development Bank.

E. Fourth World Water Forum, Mexico City, 2006, and Fifth World Water Forum, Istanbul, 2009

92. The World Water Forum and Ministerial Conference are initiatives of the World Water Council and host Governments, aimed at raising awareness and promoting active stakeholder discussions on water issues all over the world. As a major international event on water, the Forum seeks to enable multi-stakeholder participation and dialogue to influence water policymaking at the global and national levels, to improve living standards for people all over the world and to promote more responsible water resources use and management in line with the pursuit of sustainable development.

93. The Fourth World Water Forum, held in Mexico City in March 2006, focused on good practices and concrete field actions in five key themes under the conference slogan, "Local actions for global challenges".

94. In cooperation with the Fourth World Water Forum and the Japan Water Forum, UNICEF organized the second Children's World Water Forum as a parallel event. The focus of the proposed event is to highlight intergenerational cooperation, strengthening dialogue between policymakers and the children of the world.

95. The Fifth World Water Forum, held in Istanbul in March 2009, focused on the overarching theme of "Bridging divides for water". This theme referred not just to the geographical crossroads between Europe and Asia, the Middle East and Africa, the North and the South, but also to the barriers between modern-age and traditional water cultures and uses, between rich and poor, and between developed and developing regions of the world.

96. The theme emphasized the need for greater interaction, communication and functional harmonization of the various entities involved in or affected by water management. It also sent out a message to the water community that water is not an end in itself, but rather a means for our development and well-being. Interaction with other sectors is therefore needed to understand how water can contribute to the solution of common problems faced by all affected sectors. This was also the message of the UN-Water's third *World Water Development Report, Water in a Changing World*, which was launched at the Forum.

F. International Water Management Institute

97. The International Water Management Institute, based in Sri Lanka, implements research studies focusing on analysis of the trade-offs between water development, water management and the environment. Its new thematic structure covers water basin management; land, water and livelihoods; agriculture, water and cities; and water management and environment.

98. The Institute contributed to the Copenhagen consensus project on development by submitting proposals highlighting the lack of access to safe and affordable domestic water supply and sanitation and water for productive purposes for the rural poor. The three investment proposals presented were ranked among the best, likely to be highly cost-effective (see http://www.copenhagenconsensus.com/).

99. In 2007 the Institute published the book "Water for Food, Water for Life". This comprehensive assessment of water management in agriculture is the product of a broad partnership of practitioners, researchers and policymakers.

G. Other important partnership activities

100. The members of the International Association of Hydrogeologists, a scientific and educational non-governmental organizations, are active in promoting the theme "water for life" in their professional roles as regulators, academics and researchers on groundwater. Its members also act as advisers to United Nations agencies, Governments and other non-governmental organizations. The Association works to improve the science, policy and information base for groundwater planning by fostering cooperation and information exchange among professionals, supporting

reliable and long-term data sets. It will devote significant resources to Africa during the period 2005-2015, recognizing that technically sound groundwater management will be critical in the types of basins and aquifers that exist in Africa. More information on the Association is available at its website (www.iah.org).

101. A large number of non-governmental organizations, as well as research institutes and other entities dealing with water issues, have indicated interest in preparing and organizing activities related to the International "Water for Life" Decade and using its logo. It is expected that a strong network of interested parties will be established for the purpose of engaging in the activities related to the Decade.

IX. Conclusions and recommendations

102. **Further mobilization of resources for the implementation of actions will be needed for the second half of the Decade, with the active involvement of all stakeholders, such as Governments, including both traditional and emerging donors, non-governmental organizations and private foundations.**

103. **Member States may wish to consider setting up national mechanisms or designating focal points in their respective countries to facilitate and achieve results related to the second half of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015.**

104. **If the goals of the "Water for Life" Decade are to be achieved in Africa, and words on gender are to be put into action, during the second half of the Decade special focus needs to be placed on the region's water development and management, with the involvement of the UN-Water regional mechanism, and on gender, water and sanitation initiatives.**

105. **For the remainder of the Decade, UN-Water will continue to facilitate the coordinated system-wide response necessary for the implementation of activities in support of the "Water for Life" Decade, giving equal consideration to water and sanitation.**

106. **Member States, national and international organizations, major groups and the private sector are urged to make increased voluntary contributions to the multi-donor trust fund and programmes of UN-Water for the second half of the Decade.**

107. **Interested stakeholders, including international and regional organizations and non-governmental organizations, are encouraged to link their water-related activities to the second half of the "Water for Life" Decade and to consider new partnerships and engagement with UN-Water and its members.**